

Production Suggestions

Fiction or non-fiction writing

Creating Publications: Harnessing the Written Word

Publications can educate, inform, and motivate. They can transmit skills, spread news, and promote ideas. They can cover any topic, use a wide variety of formats, and reach individuals and areas you couldn't otherwise reach. A flier can announce an event in your own town. A poster can give a quick tip by combining a short message with a powerful graphic. A brochure can teach someone about an important topic. A book can guide a reader through strategies for dealing with various problems.

You can't be everywhere at once, but your publication can. Printed messages can be distributed at school assemblies, posted in grocery stores, handed out at fairs and rallies. They can be found at the mall, in a doctor's office, in your home, or on the internet. Whatever your subject, whatever your audience, a printed piece that contains information in an attractive design and with appropriate illustrations can be a powerful weapon.

As you plan your publication, you will need to answer most or all of these questions:

- *What are some key publication features you have in mind?*
- *Is this a one-time publication or an ongoing one, such as a newsletter?*
- *What format will be best—poster, flier, brochure, booklet, newsletter, etc.?*
- *Will you use more than one ink color or colored paper?*
- *How does your intended format fit with the needs and interests of your audience?*
- *Who is the audience?*

Once you have answered all these questions, review the resources you have and those you will need, both cash and services, whether from volunteers or from commercial establishments, whether donated or paid for. Estimate the needs and outlays required. What research is involved? What will design and printing cost? How much will postage cost? How much time is required for writing, editing, and printing? As you make these estimates, you may realize that you need to narrow or refine your message, to revise your format, or to expand the resource list.

This kind of planning creates a good foundation for a useful publication. Seven steps to creating a publication:

- *Research the subject.*
- *Outline the document.*
- *Write the draft.*
- *Edit and revise the draft.*
- *Design the document.*
- *Print the publication.*
- *Distribute the publication.*

The amount of time required and the importance of each step will vary for different documents. If you are new to the publication process, talk with others who are familiar with it (printers, graphic designers, school newspaper and yearbook staff, etc.) to help you spot timeline issues. Later on, you will be able to help others in turn.

Research the subject: Check facts and dates. Learn what the experts have to say. Use the library. Ask the research librarian to help you; find out whether special libraries on your topic exist. Interview people who know about your subject. Ask them for other references. Talk with other groups that work on your topic. Search the internet.

Outline the document: An outline does not have to be elaborate or cast in stone, but it does provide a framework. It will help you organize your thoughts and avoid repeating some points and leaving others out or failing to get to the heart of your subject. If you're writing a flier, the outline may be simple—a checklist that includes even name, date and time, location, admission charge (if any), information on tickets, and reasons people should attend. For a 16-page booklet, the outline may be more formal: an introduction, five main topics with two or three supporting points under each topic, and a summary or conclusion.

Write the draft: Writing is hard work. Whether one person writes the whole document or several people write parts of it, a great deal of effort is involved. Some people draft documents better on a computer; others feel that they are more disciplined if they write it in longhand first. Some people have to start at the beginning; others need to write sustentative sections and then write an introduction. Find your own methods, but remember that most writers polish their drafts at least once before showing them to someone else. Read your document to see if it proceeds logically from one point to the next; then read it again for grammar and spelling. Ask others to review it. If possible, include members of the target audience as reviewers; they will give you important feedback.

Edit and revise the draft: Revise your draft based on the comments you get. Then give it to an editor. You may ask an English teacher at your school to serve as the editor. If there is a member of the team with good grammar and writing skills, ask that person to read the revised draft. Incorporate his or her changes. Then do a computer spell-check and proofread carefully. (Spell-check doesn't catch all the errors and can't catch mistakes in names and dates.)

Design the document: If you are preparing a flier and have some skills in doing layout on the computer, you could do the design yourself. But for many documents, you may want to find more experienced help. You will need to allot time for this stage—from a day or two to several weeks. In the most complicated case, you may need to look at several designs before you select one.

Print the publication: Your 'printer' may be as simple as a photocopying machine. IT may be as complex as a four-color press. A photocopier that can't staple documents is not helpful if you need 300 stapled copies. A printer that cannot fold your brochure means you'll have to find someone to do that task. Be sure to review your specifications with the printer (or team member doing the printing). If you are making copies of an original, make sure you start with the cleanest, most professional version you can. That means grammar, spelling headlines, and photos must be as correct as possible.

Distribute the publication: When you first framed your document, you talked about how it would reach your audience. Is the document for sale? If so, how will it be advertised and where will it be sold? How much will it cost? Who will handle the money? Or will it be distributed for free? Who will display it for your target audience to pick up? Where will you hand it out? What groups might include it in their mailings?

--YOVA

a. Letter to the Editor

Letters to the editor should be short and concise, typically about 250 words or four short paragraphs. For a news magazine or radio show, they should be even shorter, about 100 words. Letters should be written with passion, using strong but not strident language.

With a little practice, writing good letters to the editor is neither time-consuming nor difficult. Your letter will be most effective if it comes directly from the heart. No other form of communication can match the impact of a thoughtful letter written by a concerned citizen.

Here is what a letter to the editor should do:

It should be reactive.

It should correct facts, misimpressions, or misinformation—particularly when it controverts the original point.

It should say something quickly. Remember, 200-250 words, no more.

It should be timely. You rarely have more than about 48 hours to get your letter to the editor.

It should be signed and include your full contact information.

It should be submitted in the requested format with the required information. Make sure you take the time to read the newspaper's policy on submissions; if not, your letter may go in the trash.

--YOVA (Youth Outreach for Victim Assistance)

b. Newspaper/magazine article

What is News? News is an account of what is happening around us. It may involve current events, new initiatives, or ongoing projects or issues.

STEP #1 Choose what you will write about.

Select your story based on its importance to you and your community, its emotional impact, its timeliness and its interest. Note: all of these factors do NOT have to coincide in every story!

STEP #2 Identify What Kind of Story It Is

Hard News (+/-600 words)

This is how journalists refer to news of the day. It is a chronicle of current events / incidents and is the most common news style on the front page of your typical newspaper.

Soft News (+/-600 words)

This is a term for all the news that isn't time-sensitive. Soft news includes profiles of people, programs, or organisations.

Features (+/-1500 words)

A news feature takes one step back from the headlines. It explores an issue. News features are less time-sensitive than hard news, but no less newsworthy. They can be an effective way to write about complex issues too large for the terse style of a hard news item. For further information on the different Kinds of News Stories see: "Write 4 Us" @ www.ypp.net

STEP #3 Newsgathering

- Begin collecting articles on your subject*
- Talk to friends and associates about the subject*
- Contact any agencies or associations with interest or expertise in the area*
- Create a list of people you want to interview; cover both sides of the story by interviewing people on both sides of the issue.*
- Collect government statistics and reports on the subject*
- Get old press releases or reports to use as background*

STEP #4 Interviewing Techniques

Develop a positive, polite, but still objective, relationship with the person you are interviewing. Explain the ground rules of the interview, and mind your subject's reactions to your questions. Pace the difficulty of your questions according to your subject's responsiveness. Maintain control over the interview. Don't let them stray away from the topic. Tape record the interview for your records. Don't try to predetermine what quotes or information you will come away with. Remember: your subject is the expert on your topic, not you. For further information on Interviewing Techniques, see "Write 4 Us" @ www.ypp.net

STEP #5 Organising the Information

- *Gather your notes interviews and research into a file*
- *Review your notes*
- *Look for a common theme*
- *Search your notes for good quotes or interesting facts*
- *Develop a focus*
- *Write the focus of the article down in two or three sentences*

STEP #6 Structuring Your Article

The structure of a news story (hard & soft news, & features) is simple:

- 1) *The lead*
- 2) *The body*

The Lead: Among the most important elements of news writing are the opening paragraphs of the story. Journalists refer to this as the "lead". Its function is to summarise the story AND/OR to draw the reader in. Its function differs depending on whether it is a "hard" or "soft" news story. (See below for the difference between these two genres of news story.)

Hard News Lead

In a hard news story, the lead should be a full summary of what is to follow. It should incorporate as many of the 5 "W's" and 1 "H" (who, what, where, when, why, how) as possible.

Sample Hard News Lead

At the height of this Ontario provincial election, Toronto's Latin American youth have found themselves at the centre of a public and controversial advertising campaign sponsored by the Toronto Police Association (TPA). The ad, on display in the Yonge and Bloor subway station, shows a picture of five Latin American 'gang' members from East Los Angeles next to the caption, "There's only one thing these guys fear. Your vote."

Soft News Lead

In a soft news story, the lead should present the subject of the story by allusion. This type of opening is somewhat literary. Like a novelist, the role of writer is to grab the attention of the reader.

Sample Soft News Lead

After a few moments of conversation, you can see that twelve-year-old Binita still has a child-like exuberance. Yet she is burdened by an existence that most children her age in Canada would find difficult to imagine living.

Once the reader is drawn in, the 5 W's, etc. should be incorporated into the body of the story. They may, but need not, appear in the opening paragraphs.

The Body

The body of the story involves combining the opinions of the people you interview, some factual data, and a narrative which helps the story flow. A word of caution-In this style of writing you are not allowed to "editorialise" (state your own opinion) in any way. There is no

great difference in structure between the body of a hard news story, and the body of a soft news story. The contents of a news story, however, dictates how it will be told. For example, an organisational profile will almost necessarily be descriptive, while the reporting of a timely event will likely be reactive in tone and detail. Stick to one particular theme throughout the story. You may add different details, but they all have to relate to the original idea of the piece. You can test the relevance of a detail by measuring it against the topic of the paragraph. For example: The purpose of the paragraph is to demonstrate that some newly arrived Kosovar refugees are living in poverty. Is it relevant that the telephone rings twice during your interview? Probably not, unless the phone calls are coming from debtors. Is it relevant that the shoes she wears have holes in the toes? Definitely.

As a reporter, you are the eyes and ears for the readers. You should try to provide some visual details to bring the story to life. (This is difficult if you have conducted only phone interviews, which is why face-to-face is best.)

<http://www.equalitytoday.org/edition7/newsart.html>

c. Obituary

An obituary is usually written in paragraph form and charts the life of the deceased in chronological order.

Steps:

Check with the newspaper to see if there are any restrictions on length before you write the obituary.

Give the deceased's full name and date and place of death.

Recount the main events in the person's life, beginning with his or her birth and birthplace.

Include a list of schools attended, degrees received, vocation and hobbies.

Acknowledge any survivors, including parents, spouse and children.

Announce when and where the funeral, burial, wake and/or memorial service will take place.

Conclude with a statement regarding where memorial contributions can be sent, if applicable.

Time the publication of the obituary so that it runs a few days before the memorial service.

Tips:

Consider sending the obituary to newspapers in other cities where the deceased formerly lived or worked.

Clip copies of the obituary to send to out-of-town friends and family.

Read some of the obituaries in *The New York Times*. They are usually beautifully written and tell the story of the deceased in a wonderfully personal way.

http://www.ehow.com/how_3456_write-obituary.html

d. Persuasive

How to Write a Persuasive Essay

The purpose of a persuasive essay is to convince the reader to agree with your viewpoint or to accept your recommendation for a course of action. For instance, you might argue that the salaries of professional athletes are too high. Or you might recommend that vending machines be banned from your school cafeteria. A successful persuasive essay will use evidence to support your viewpoint, consider opposing views and present a strong conclusion.

Some people worry that adopting a school uniform policy would be too expensive. However, there are ways to lessen the cost. For example, in Seattle, Washington, local businesses help to pay for uniforms at South Shore Middle School. In Long Beach, California, graduating students donate or sell their old uniforms.

Use evidence to support your viewpoint. Statistics, facts, quotations from experts and examples will help you to build a strong case for your argument. Appeal to the reader's sense of logic by presenting specific and relevant evidence in a well-organized manner.

Consider opposing views. Try to anticipate the concerns and questions that a reader might have about your subject. Responding to these points will give you the chance to explain why your viewpoint or recommendation is the best one.

Present a strong conclusion. All your evidence and explanations should build toward a strong ending in which you summarize your view in a clear and memorable way. The conclusion in a persuasive essay might include a call to action.

TIP: Use a pleasant and reasonable tone in your essay. Sarcasm and name-calling weaken an argument. Logic and fairness will help to keep it strong.

<http://www.infoplease.com/homework/writingskills7.html>

e. Expository

How to Write an Expository Essay

An expository essay informs the reader about a particular subject. It is intended to provide information rather than convince the reader of a particular point of view.

When writing an essay, follow these basic steps:

Select a topic:

Be sure the topic is narrow enough to make it manageable within the space of an essay. For example, write about Attention Deficit Disorder in Jones Elementary School sixth Graders, instead of the broader topic of Attention Deficit Disorder in general.

II. Write a thesis sentence:

Be sure the thesis statement (or sentence) expresses a controlling idea that is neither too broad nor too specific to be developed effectively. This is the expression of the main idea covered in the essay.

III. Select a method of development:

Consider all of the following methods before you finally settle on the one which will best serve your thesis:

- *definition*
- *example*
- *compare and contrast*
- *cause and effect*
- *classification*
- *process analysis*

IV. Organize the essay:

List the major topics that each of the body paragraphs in your essay will discuss. Fill in the primary supporting points that each body paragraph of the essay will contain.

Write topic sentences for the body paragraphs of the essay:

For each body paragraph, write a topic sentence that directly relates to the thesis sentence.

Write the body paragraphs of the essay:

Each body paragraph should develop the primary supporting point covered in that paragraph's topic sentence.

Write a paragraph of introduction:

An introductory paragraph should state the thesis of the essay, introduce the major topics in the body paragraphs of the essay, and gain the interest of the reader.

Write a paragraph of conclusion:

A concluding paragraph should restate the thesis and major points of the essay and bring the essay to an appropriate and effective close without digressing into new issues.

<http://www.accd.edu/nvc/areas/owl/expositoryessay.htm>

f. Short fiction

Rules and Tools for Writing Short Stories, Or Why Good Fiction is Better Than Bad Fiction

You may not wish to follow these rules as you write your own stories, but you should at least be aware of them, and know that if you're not following them, you are not following them by choice. If you do find yourself following them, it won't be by choice. It will be because you are writing well.

If you don't believe that art should have rules, then think of what follows as a set of standards, or a collection of common sense. If what follows doesn't make sense to you, then you may be a very good writer, but you are not a short-story writer in any sense I understand.

About style

Show 'em, don't tell 'em.

Stay in control: outline your story, and follow your outline.

Stay in control: don't be controlled by your outline. Allow yourself to be surprised by your characters and what they do. Write to find out what happens next.

If those last two items seem to contradict one another, you're right, so find the rule that works best for you, but remember that the desired result is the same: a story that presents an ironic combination of inevitability and surprise. However you get there, you must end with a satisfying, strongly constructed, seamless story.

Be selective. Edgar Allan Poe, one of the principle architects of modern short fiction, insisted that every element, every word even, of a short story must contribute to the harmonious whole. Poe was right. Put into the story only those elements of character, plot, and setting that are relevant to what the story does. Anything else is fat. Be selective, and select no fat. And be sure to edit out anything you put into the story just to show off. As Faulkner said, delete "your darlings."

Being selective is especially important when you're writing autobiographical fiction or even just writing from personal experience (which is inevitable). Remember that what was significant to you may not be relevant to the story. If that's the case, save it for another story where it will fit better.

Watch your step with point of view. A good rule for point of view in short stories is one is enough. Multiple points of view are okay, but the more you have the harder it is to do it right. The hard-and-fast rule is that whenever you're in one point of view, that's the only point of view you're in.

Write strong. Verb constructions are stronger than noun constructions. The active voice is stronger than the passive voice. Every noun does not need an adjective. Reexamine every adverb and throw away at least half of them, especially those that end in "ly," and almost all of the ones that end in "ly" to modify how a character has just said a line of dialogue.

Keep writing strong. Choose strong words: short, Anglo-Saxon words are much stronger than long, Latinate words. Choose the right word, and not, as Mark Twain cautioned us, "its second cousin." Write lean, because extra, unnecessary words get in the way and weaken your story.

Avoid the habitual past, and get right to the direct, moving action. A story has to hit the ground running. The first sentence in the story should be the best sentence in the story.

End the story gloriously. The last sentence in the story should be the best sentence in the story.

Have I just contradicted myself? Can there be more than one best sentence in a story? Maybe not mathematically, but you should try for it, and you should throw in another at the climax, and a few more during the buildup of tension. Let your story be peppered with best sentences.

Irony is a major ingredient of writing at the sentence level. It means surprise. Use surprising, unexpected words and put them together in original ways that mean even more than they say.

Caution: don't overwrite. Don't write fancy. Watch out for five-dollar words. It's a thin line, but don't show off, even when your fingers are dancing on the keys, celebrating the pleasure of words. How do you write with the grace of Fred Astaire without being a showoff? Perhaps the best advice comes from Hemingway: be honest. And be honest more consistently than Hemingway.

Reexamine the last sentence of every paragraph, the last paragraph of every scene, and the last scene of every story. Does it just summarize what's already been shown in the action? If so, dump the summary. End your paragraphs, scenes, and stories with action, not reflection.

About Structure

Tell a story. Something has to happen to someone. That may seem to go without saying, but remember that a story without plot is like a meal without food.

The story starts at the beginning. It must hit the ground running. (Have I said that before?) The first sentence in the story must be the best sentence in the story. Don't begin with a weather report unless the weather is essential to the plot. Watch out for one character alone for too many pages at the beginning of the story; you (or your character) may get lost in thought and forget to have something happen.

Remember Chekhov's loaded rifle. Applying that rule to short stories, if there's a loaded rifle in an early scene, it must go off in or before the last scene of the story. Conversely, if a bomb goes off at the end of the story, chances are that bomb is in large measure what the story's about, and it must be planted, ticking, early in the story.

Don't be overly predictable. Surprise. Irony is an essential ingredient of plot construction. Irony at the plot level is the unexpected event that makes perfect sense. Make the reader react with "AHA!"-not with "Duh." or "Huh?"

The beginning of a story has to make the reader want to read the middle of the story. The well-worn phrase that wears well is, "Hook 'em with curiosity, and hold 'em with conflict."

Conflict is an absolute necessity of fiction short or long. Otherwise, what's the difference? The short story assumes there are obstacles to overcome, differences to reconcile, winners vs. losers, good guys vs. bad guys, inner struggles, arguments, fistfights, car chases, or merely difficult decisions. Mild or major, the conflict is at the heart of both character and plot. And somewhere in the plot, this conflict often results in a significant shift in the balance of power.

Which means: stories are about change. When we say "something happens to someone," we're talking about a change.

Often--perhaps more often than just often--that change is the result of a choice. A character must make a choice, and because of that choice, the character changes.

Built into that last statement is the concept of consequence. Consequence makes all the difference when it comes to plot. Vladimir Nabokov's wonderful, simple example shows the difference between a plot and a mere sequence of events. The latter: "The King died and the Queen died." The former: "The King died, and the Queen died of grief." A plot is not just a sequence of events: A, then B, then C, then D. A plot says B happened as a result of A, and that because of B, C had to happen, which led (surprisingly or inevitably or both) to D, and so on. Until: Climax! Need I say more?

More: Resolution, or reverberation, or relaxation. Stories usually let the reader relax a bit after the climax. That's kind of them, but the story shouldn't just roll over and go to sleep. Keep the story alive to the end, and make the last sentence the best one in the story.

I've now said all I care to say about the theory of short fiction. These rules that I've just listed, and many more that I haven't, have served the art form for millennia, since stories were first swapped around the primal campfire. They have withstood history, human fads and fashions, and even television (don't get me started), and they will survive far into the future, regardless of how technology may complicate the way stories are distributed from mind to mind.

About truth: Be significant. The reason stories are important is because they're about what's important. That doesn't mean that all stories must be about love and death (although the finest stories are about one or the other and the finest of all are about both). But they must be about things that matter. The things that happen to your characters have to be important to the reader, because they're important to you, because they're things that matter in terms of the human condition.

Significance is important for its entertainment value: desire, danger, quest, and change.

Significance is also important for its moral value: we create art in order to make this a better planet for ourselves, our fellow human beings, and our fellow species. If you don't believe that, or if you think it's too grand a challenge, let me go further and say that all we do in life is for that purpose, and art (in this case writing short fiction) is but a concentrated effort in the grand cause.

Lighten up. Have fun with your writing. Art is for play, after all, and for God's sake, don't put your readers to sleep. You should indeed write about matters that are socially significant, but avoid sermons, and remember that fiction is primarily about people, not about ideas.

Speaking of significance, things that are not significant are laundry lists (a generic term not always referring to clothing), weather reports, and stories about writers. Also gratuitous sex. Sex is fine (you better believe it), but it must be important to the story and its plot and its theme and its characters, and not there just for the fun of it. The act itself, in the story, has to have a reason to be there in terms of fiction: it illustrates a character, or better yet, advances the plot by changing a relationship.

Respect your reader's intelligence. Imagine that your reader is at least as intelligent as you. Don't explain your story; if you're afraid your reader won't get it, you need to do some rewriting. Don't tell your reader what to think; persuade your reader to think a certain way by how you write.

ï Avoid gimmicks. Don't overpunctuate!!!! Don't use phony phonetics (sez I). These aren't just matters of style; they're matters of honesty.

Write with authority; that's why you're called an author. That means, as we've been told forever, write about what you know about. This does not mean you must travel the globe like Richard Halliburton or participate in every sport like George Plimpton before you can write. If you think the things you already know about are not important enough, you're mistaken. Writing about what you know about does not mean you can't set your stories in foreign lands you've never visited, or far-off planets, for that matter. It means that what the story is really about is its emotional content, the part that comes from within you, and that's something you can't lie about. Write what you know, and tell the truth.

Do research so you won't be embarrassed by mistakes, but don't let research turn your lively fiction into a dull catalog of facts.

Use your imagination, and lie. But even then, tell the truth about it. Remember that a story about a struggle between blobs and robots, set on Pluto in 2356, is really about human life on Earth today.

Don't be afraid of the dark. I encourage you to write about troublesome things. That doesn't mean you can't write about love and laughter, but you should also realize that all good stories about relationships are about the problems in relationships, and that all humor comes from pain and suffering.

Respect your characters. Stories are about people, not about symbols. You and your reader must spend time with these characters, so make them individual and interesting. Love these people, even the rotters; they have a lot to tell you. Show (don't tell) what they're like, and let them speak and think for themselves. Let your readers draw their own conclusions about these people; if you've shown the characters in action, you don't have to worry about how the reader will judge them.

Dialogue has to sound like real people talking. They may be outrageous people, and they may say outrageous things, but only the dullest people speak in cliches, and the dullest people are seldom worth writing or reading about. Another thing that real people don't do is pack their conversations full of plot information.

Read your words aloud. Be prepared to be embarrassed, and if you're embarrassed because something sounds phony, you have some rewriting to do.

All writers rewrite. If you're satisfied with your first draft, you're not an artist. That's not writing. As Capote quipped to Kerouac, that's just typing.

You may break the rules. In fact, you should break the rules. And when you break the rules, do so on purpose and out loud, because breaking the rules is part of what your story is about.

The one rule you may not break is this:

Your motto shall be: LET ME ENTERTAIN YOU.

<http://www.danielpublishing.com/resourcesback.htm>

g. Memoir

How to write a memoir: Writing memoirs is something everyone should do, whether they are a writer or not. Memoirs can be a valuable family heirloom.

If you have ever thought of writing your own memoirs, you might have been stopped by feeling like no one would ever want to read about you! This is absolutely not true. If you write your memoirs well, they will, at the very least, be a treasured family heirloom. There are fascinating stories in even the most ordinary lives and all we have to do is find them and bring them to the page. Using colorful language and developing lush stories is all we need to do to keep our memoirs from becoming a boring history lesson. Keep in mind that memoirs can be like

home movies, if you don't make it interesting to readers that don't know you, they most likely won't be much more interesting to those who do.

Memoirs should start from the beginning, but don't bore your audience with minute details about your birth. Make facts short and elaborate wherever you have an interesting or unusual story. Maybe there was a horrible storm the day you were born, or your mother gave birth to you in the family home, focus on the most interesting facts to present to your reader. Unless the doctor that delivered you had a witty comment or other notable features or personality, don't bore your readers with his name, where he went to medical school and how many children he had. Likewise, don't go through every single age chronologically whether anything happened worth noticing that year or not. Include mentions of any vacations you took, people you met along the way and any particular difficulties you may have had. Did you have troubles in math? Tell about it. Family members especially will love to hear about things like this that can cause them to say, oh, maybe it runs in the family!

Unless you're sure they won't mind, don't include the full names of anyone that wouldn't appreciate being made public in your book. Although it is a factual book and your memoirs, you shouldn't make public the private lives of others whom you are no longer associated with. Memories can be fuzzy things and what if you didn't get the story quite right, you may be sued for libel!

If there are any goals you worked towards during your lifetime, career dreams, things you wanted to accomplish, include these in your memoirs and include what steps you took to achieve your dreams. If you accomplished what you set out to do, tell about how it made you feel to finally realize what you'd been working towards and give any advice that helped you get there.

Try to get the dates right. If you include fairly accurate timelines, it will be easier for people to check out what else was going on at the same time and it will give your readers a frame of reference to work from. It also gives credibility to your memoirs when you can associate them with a certain time period. Even if your memoirs never get published, they will serve as a valuable family history which will be treasured for generations to come. Even if you are not a writer, you should try to assemble some sort of memoirs to leave a record of your life and accomplishments, no matter how large or small.

http://vt.essortment.com/howtowritemem_rmtv.htm

h. Recipe

Writing a recipe: A recipe is made up of 3 parts:

- 1. A list of all the ingredients needed (metric);*
- 2. A list of all the equipment;*
- 3. the method, i.e. how to make the dish.*

A recipe may also include:

- * A picture of the final product;*
- * Serving suggestions, e.g. how to present the dish or ideas for accompaniments;*
- * Number of portions it serves.*

Ingredients

As well as giving the precise measurement needed, the ingredient list may also give details for the size of a food item needed, e.g. a large egg or small can of tomatoes. In addition, sometimes it will explain how the ingredient should be prepared, e.g. '1 onion, chopped', '50g cheese, grated' or '100g Red Kidney beans (canned), drained'.

All measurements should be given in metric units. Do not use imperial and metric measurements in the same recipe.

It is helpful to measure out all the ingredients required before starting to make the recipe.

Equipment

It is helpful to gather together all the equipment required before starting to make the recipe. You may need to share some pieces of equipment, so plan ahead. If you need the oven, ensure that the shelves are set to the correct height and it is preheated to the precise temperature. You may need to prepare cake tins or other equipment in advance. Check the recipe.

Method

The method is a logical step-by-step set of instructions. In addition, it may:

- * Give instructions to preheat the oven first, if required;*
- * Sequence the task to ensure effective use of time;*
- * Give other steps that need to be undertaken while food is cooking;*
- * Highlight specific skills, such as sift, whisk, mix, fold, beat, line or cream.*

<http://www.nutrition.org.uk/home.asp?siteId=43§ionId=548&subSectionId=446&parentSection=300&which=2>

i. Press Release

Press releases (also called news releases) form the basis of a news story. An editor may run the release as written or assign a reporter to attend an event, conduct interviews, and write the story. News releases may be sent out prior to an event for advance publicity or whenever you have news or information to share. In addition to media outlets, be sure to send your news releases to corporations to include in their newsletters, as well as to public information officers of local government offices, social service agencies, and nonprofit organizations.

Don't bury the most important information at the end of a story or broadcast. Write press releases in the inverted-pyramid style. This means that the most important facts (who, what, where, when, and why) come first. The less important facts come next, and the least important facts come last. Note that importance is defined by what the media and the public will find important, not by what your team wants highlighted. Study news articles to see what type of information is usually emphasized. By following the inverted-pyramid style of writing, you'll make sure that your audience or readers get the most important information first.

Here are some more tips for successful new releases:

Address your release to a specific person. News outlets get tons of news pitches every day; addressing yours to a specific person will increase its chances of being read.

Include a release date. This tells the editor that the news is timely.

Include the name and phone number of a contact person reporters can call if they have questions.

Create a catchy headline (no more than ten words) that explains your story. A creative and informative headline will help your story stand out.

Include your city and state on the release, even if the event you are planning is local.

If possible, limit your release to no more than one or two pages.

--YOVA

Media Event

Planning Special Events:

A special event is a way to focus on an issue, celebrate successes, build a sense of neighborhood or community, provide a positive alternative for youth, raise funds, or educate and enlist the community. It can be a party, an information fair a car wash, an assembly, a race, a street fair, a community picnic--your imagination is the limit!

Getting Started: Bring together a core group to select the date (make sure there are no other major community events scheduled for the same time); decide on the kind of event and the location (make sure it's available on the date you choose); and determine what committees you'll need to make the event a success. Even though committees will do most of the work, there should be a chair who coordinates the entire process. You may want to have an honorary board or to invite local sponsors (e.g., school or civic officials, businesses) to serve.

Keep track of resources you will need. Brainstorm ways to get donated goods or services, and borrow equipment whenever possible to keep costs down. Perhaps public officials can waive permit fees. Maybe the sanitation department can provide trash cans or the recreation department can loan sports equipment. Consider "advertising" your donors so that they get credit for their public spirit. Cash may be your last resort, but recognize that some things just cost money.

An Action Plan: Here is a schedule of the things that need to happen to put on a successful special event and who needs to do them.

16 to 20 weeks before the event:

- *Decide who is going to oversee (chair) the event.*
- *Recruit volunteers.*
- *Bring everyone together and decide the following:*
 - *What do you want to happen at your event?*
 - *When do you want to have your event? Are there any other events that will conflict? Do you have a rain date?*
 - *Where are you going to hold your event? Consider seating, parking, and accessibility for people with disabilities, and transportation.*
 - *How much money do you need? How can you get resources and services donated?*
 - *Who should attend? How many people can you accommodate?*
 - *How long is your event going to last?*
 - *Are you going to need any permits?*
 - *Who is going to be on what committee? Committees usually cover such areas as invitations and hospitality, awards and prizes, entertainment and publicity, exhibits and information, and food and decorations. Form committees and appoint committee chairs who have the time, energy and commitment to do the work.*

12 to 16 weeks before the event

- *The exhibits and information committee sends out letters of invitation to groups they would like to have as exhibitors. Include purpose, date, time, place, how exhibiting at your event will benefit the exhibitors, and sign-up requirements.*

8 to 12 weeks before the event: Chair's checklist

- *Recruit an honorary chair to help publicize and draw people to your event. Local celebrities or TV and radio station personalities are good choices.*
- *Meet with committee chairs regularly, offer help when needed, and monitor progress with tasks.*

- *With help from the honorary chair, identify potential partners and local celebrities.*

Invitations and hospitality committee checklist

- *Decide whether you are going to use fliers, signs, or other notices to issue invitations; work with the entertainment and publicity committee. Post fliers four to six weeks before the event.*
- *Invite local celebrities.*
- *Estimate how many people will be attending, and tell the food and decorations committee.*
- *Make sure that you have adequate parking, handicapped access, restrooms, and a secure place for coats (don't forget hangers).*
- *Have on hand a first-aid kit, fire extinguisher, cell phone (or access to a phone), and emergency phone numbers.*
- *Make nametags and site maps for all workers and exhibitors.*
- *Let the food and decorations committee know how many tables are needed for registration.*
- *Recruit volunteer greeters and runners for last-minute needs. Designate greeters to accompany celebrity guests.*

Awards and prizes committee checklist

- *Decide criteria for awards, and recruit judges. Arrange for the honorary chair or other community leaders to present the awards.*
- *Select and order awards and door prizes or ask businesses to donate them.*

Entertainment and publicity committee checklist

- *Plan activities and entertainment. Arrange for stage, sound, and audiovisual equipment as required.*
- *Reproduce educational 'take one' brochures and bookmarks.*
- *Make promotional signs, directional signs, and posters.*
- *Develop a media contacts list. Call radio and television stations and newspapers to introduce yourself and the event*
- *Prepare a media advisory to send out one week before the event. Put together an informational kit for the media that includes a press release, fliers, bookmarks and brochures, and lists of sponsors and participating celebrities.*
- *Recruit a volunteer photographer to take pictures at the event.*
- *Be available on the day of the event to meet and greet press representatives and answer questions.*

Exhibits and information committee checklist

- *Follow up on invitations to exhibitors, and verify who is planning to come. Send confirmation letters.*
- *Estimate the total number of exhibitors, and determine space/table requirements. Be sure to include a display for "take one" brochures and product giveaways. Let the food and decorations committee know how many tables and chairs you will need, and collaborate on layout.*

- *Recruit volunteers to help exhibitors set up, load, and unload materials.*

Food and decorations committee checklist

- *Decide what decorations you will have and where they should go.*
- *Map where exhibits, food, entertainment, registration, etc., will be set up. Pay attention to the location of electrical outlets.*
- *Decide if you are going to serve refreshments. If you don't want to provide refreshments, you could invite local restaurants to sell food.*
- *Arrange for all required tables, chairs, napkins, cups, plates, and utensils for food.*
- *Recruit volunteers for setup before the event and cleanup afterward.*

One week before the event

- *Send a media advisory to radio, television, and print media. Call key press contacts to confirm coverage.*
- *Purchase nonperishable food and utensils, etc.*
- *Confirm all deliveries and pickups.*

One day before the event

- *Pick up orders and arrange deliveries as appropriate.*
- *Test audiovisual and sound equipment.*
- *Set up tables and decorate if possible.*
- *Purchase all perishable food items or ensure that all food is prepared.*
- *Do a final review to make sure all checklist items are completed.*

The big day!

- *Install or complete decorations.*
- *Set up tables, stage, and audiovisual equipment.*
- *Ensure that first-aid kit, fire extinguishers, phone, and emergency phone numbers are readily accessible but out of the way.*
- *Ensure that volunteer greeters, helpers, and runners are on-site, briefed, and ready to go.*
- *Assemble all materials for activities. Relax and have a great event.*
- *Don't forget to thank all donors, workers, partners, and celebrities at the event...*

After the event

- *Clean up after the event, and return all borrowed equipment and supplies*
- *Send thank-you notes to all who worked so hard to make the event a success.*
- *Make notes for future events. Jot down suggestions of things to do differently and things that went well.*
- *Meet with your committee chairs for an evaluation of the event.*

If you plan all of these details in advance you will increase the chance of success for your projects. Haphazard planning invariably leads to failure.

You will need good leadership skills especially during the project selection and planning stage. More people are involved at this point, and there are likely to be differences of opinion about what to do and how to do it. How these problems are handled is crucial to the ultimate success of the project. Many a good project idea was doomed by internal conflict and

confrontation. It is important for leaders to be sensitive to diversity concerns and to have good problem-solving and organizational/management skills.

--YOVA

Print Media

The Principles of Design: There are many basic concepts that underly the field of design. They are often categorized differently depending on philosophy or teaching methodology. The first thing we need to do is organize them, so that we have a framework for this discussion.

We can group all of the basic tenets of design into two categories: principles and elements. For this article, the principles of design are the overarching truths of the profession. They represent the basic assumptions of the world that guide the design practice, and affect the arrangement of objects within a composition. By comparison, the elements of design are the components of design themselves, the objects to be arranged.

Let's begin by focusing on the principles of design, the axioms of our profession. Specifically, we will be looking at the following principles:

- * Balance
- * Rhythm
- * Proportion
- * Dominance
- * Unity

Balance: Balance is an equilibrium that results from looking at images and judging them against our ideas of physical structure (such as mass, gravity or the sides of a page). It is the arrangement of the objects in a given design as it relates to their visual weight within a composition. Balance usually comes in two forms: symmetrical and asymmetrical.

Symmetrical: Symmetrical balance occurs when the weight of a composition is evenly distributed around a central vertical or horizontal axis. Under normal circumstances it assumes identical forms on both sides of the axis. When symmetry occurs with similar, but not identical, forms it is called approximate symmetry. In addition, it is possible to build a composition equally around a central point resulting in radial symmetry¹. Symmetrical balance is also known as formal balance.

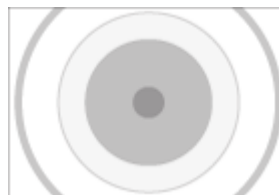
Asymmetrical: Asymmetrical balance occurs when the weight of a composition is not evenly distributed around a central axis. It involves the arranging of objects of differing size in a composition such that they balance one another with their respective visual weights. Often there is one dominant form that is offset by many smaller forms. In general, asymmetrical compositions tend to have a greater sense of visual tension. Asymmetrical balance is also known as informal balance.



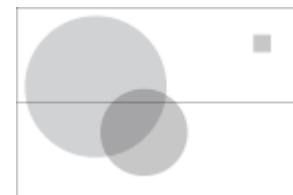
Horizontal
symmetry



Approximate
horizontal
symmetry

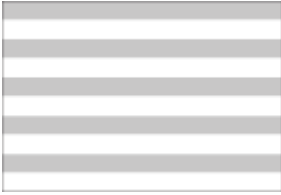


Radial
symmetry



Asymmetry

Rhythm: Rhythm is the repetition or alternation of elements, often with defined intervals between them. Rhythm can create a sense of movement, and can establish pattern and texture. There are many different kinds of rhythm, often defined by the feeling it evokes when looking at it.



- *Regular: A regular rhythm occurs when the intervals between the elements, and often the elements themselves, are similar in size or length.*



- *Flowing: A flowing rhythm gives a sense of movement, and is often more organic in nature.*



- *Progressive: A progressive rhythm shows a sequence of forms through a progression of steps.*

Proportion: Proportion is the comparison of dimensions or distribution of forms. It is the relationship in scale between one element and another, or between a whole object and one of its parts. Differing proportions within a composition can relate to different kinds of balance or symmetry, and can help establish visual weight and depth. In the below examples, notice how the smaller elements seem to recede into the background while the larger elements come to the front.



Dominance: Dominance relates to varying degrees of emphasis in design. It determines the visual weight of a composition, establishes space and perspective, and often resolves where the eye goes first when looking at a design. There are three stages of dominance, each relating to the weight of a particular object within a composition.

- *Dominant: The object given the most visual weight, the element of primary emphasis that advances to the foreground in the composition.*
- *Sub-dominant: The element of secondary emphasis, the elements in the middle ground of the composition.*
- *Subordinate: The object given the least visual weight, the element of tertiary emphasis that recedes to the background of the composition.*
- *In the below example, the trees act as the dominant element, the house and hills as the secondary element, and the mountains as the tertiary element.*



Unity: The concept of unity describes the relationship between the individual parts and the whole of a composition. It investigates the aspects of a given design that are necessary to tie the composition together, to give it a sense of wholeness, or to break it apart and give it a sense of variety. Unity in design is a concept that stems from some of the Gestalt theories of visual perception and psychology, specifically those dealing with how the human brain organizes visual information into categories, or groups².

Gestalt theory itself is rather lengthy and complex, dealing in various levels of abstraction and generalization, but some of the basic ideas that come out of this kind of thinking are more universal.

Closure: Closure is the idea that the brain tends to fill in missing information when it perceives an object is missing some of its pieces. Objects can be deconstructed into groups of smaller parts, and when some of these parts are missing the brain tends to add information about an object to achieve closure. In the below examples, we compulsively fill in the missing information to create shape.



Continuance: Continuance is the idea that once you begin looking in one direction, you will continue to do so until something more significant catches your attention. Perspective, or the use of dominant directional lines, tends to successfully direct the viewer's eye in a given direction. In addition, the eye direction of any subjects in the design itself can cause a similar effect. In the below example, the eye immediately goes down the direction of the road ending up in the upper right corner of the frame of reference. There is no other dominant object to catch and redirect the attention.



Similarity, Proximity and Alignment: Items of similar size, shape and color tend to be grouped together by the brain, and a semantic relationship between the items is formed. In addition, items in close proximity to or aligned with one another tend to be grouped in a similar way. In the below example, notice how much easier it is to group and define the shape of the objects in the upper left than the lower right.



Related concepts: There are many additional concepts that are related to the principles of design. These can include specific terms and/or techniques that are in some way based on one or more of the above tenets. In the end, they add to the collection of compositional tools available for use by the designer.

Contrast or Opposition: Contrast addresses the notion of dynamic tension or the degree of conflict that exists within a given design between the visual elements in the composition.

Positive and Negative Space:

Positive and negative space refers to the juxtaposition of figure and ground in a composition. The objects in the environment represent the positive space, and the environment itself is the negative space.

Rule of Thirds: The rule of thirds is a compositional tool that makes use of the notion that the most interesting compositions are those in which the primary element is off center. Basically, take any frame of reference and divide it into thirds placing the elements of the composition on the lines in between.

Visual Center: The visual center of any page is just slightly above and to the right of the actual (mathematical) center. This tends to be the natural placement of visual focus, and is also sometimes referred to as museum height.

Color and Typography: Many would place color and typography along side the five principals I have outlined above. I personally believe both to be elements of design, so I'll give them some attention in my next column. In addition, both topics are so robust that I plan on writing an entire article about each of them in the future.

http://www.digital-web.com/articles/principles_of_design/

Radio

Recording Tips

Provide the recording engineer with copies of the music that is to be recorded in advance of the recording session.

Turn off heating/cooling equipment. There is no such thing as a quiet air-handling system! Make sure that the equipment is really off and that it will not turn on when a particular thermostat setting is reached.

Some lighting systems and lighting controllers make substantial noise. If you can hear humming or buzzing noises when stage lighting is turned on, then an alternate lighting source must be provided.

Turn off any electrical appliances such as refrigerators, vending machines, etc. Also, don't forget to turn off or unplug telephones.

Post signs outside doors to prevent the entry of unauthorized personnel during the recording session. Lock all doors where possible. Tape over door knockers or door handles that might make noise when an unsuspecting person tries to enter the recording space.

Do not use "noisy" conductor podiums. If risers are used for choruses, ensure that all squeaking and rattling parts have been taped down with duct tape. Sometimes towels or blankets can be taped over noisy equipment. Pay particular attention to chairs and piano benches. These can be a major source of annoying noises.

It is best to record during times of low automobile traffic, such as late at night. Once a particular recording space is internally silenced, it is amazing how much sound from nearby traffic and car radios can be heard.

Turn off all watch alarms, pagers, and cellular telephones. These really shouldn't even be allowed in the recording session.

Turning music pages can be quite noisy, especially if a number of musicians turn the pages at the same time. It is best to use sheet music that is taped together to avoid page turns. Three-ring binders are particularly noisy. Sometimes soft plastic page covers can be used in three-ring binders to minimize the noise (do not use the hard, shiny plastic covers as they make more noise).

Performers must be absolutely quiet at the beginning and the end of musical pieces (do not move, breathe, or turn pages on the music until the recording engineer indicates that it is safe). It is quite a temptation to turn pages to the next piece ahead of time. Remember that reverberation times in large halls and churches can approach 20 seconds after the last note is played on some musical instruments.

Choral groups should check risers and conductors platforms for squeaks. Some squeaks can be eliminated by taping loose parts, stuffing materials between adjacent parts or by lubrication. On squeak-prone risers, performers should find a spot that causes no squeaks and try to minimize body motion during recording.

If possible, allow musical instruments' sound to die out naturally. If the sound must be damped, do it carefully and artistically, especially on piano and acoustic guitar.

Ensure that all musical instruments are in tune.

Performers must avoid "noisy" clothing. Nylon warm-up suits, etc. make significant noise when the material rubs against itself. Performers should wear comfortable, quiet shoes.

Solo and small vocal ensemble singers should find a comfortable spot to stand. It is best if performers can refrain from significant movements in position relative to the microphones during the performance. When "close miking" techniques are used, it is best if the performer directs his/her voice or instrument toward the same direction at all times. Significant head movements or instrument movements should be avoided (such as "theatrical" style body movements that would be encountered during live performances). These movements can cause the left to right channel balances to change dramatically.

If significant editing is to be performed with "cut and paste" techniques, repeated sections must be performed at the same tempo, with the same dynamics, and with a similar blend in order to make the editing seamless.

For large musical groups it is sometimes advantageous to have a person who is intimately familiar with the musical selections, serve as a listener to help point out musical errors and to help judge the musicality of various takes.

Special Tips for Live Recordings with an Audience:

Minimize paper handouts given to the audience. With multiple sheet or multiple page handouts, plan the page turns to be between musical pieces. Allow enough time between pieces to allow the noise from the page turns to die down before starting the next selection. Indicate where applause is acceptable. Remember that someone in the audience will invariably begin to

clap before the sound from the musicians and any reverberation has died down, therefore it is nearly impossible to remove applause in this situation.

Other sources of noise in live performances include audience members with colds, noisy candy or lozenge wrappers, small children and babies.

Place signs in strategic places announcing the fact that the performance is being recorded. This can include instructions on turning off pagers, watch alarms, and cellular telephones. Place ushers during the entire performance at all entrances and allow the audience to enter only during specified breaks in the music. Be prepared to allow the noise of newly seated audience members to die down before starting the next musical selection. It is better to allow "too much" time than not enough.

It is preferable to avoid the use of PA systems or other means of artificial amplification because the recording microphones will pick up the loudspeaker sound as well the direct sound. This is undesirable because the fidelity of the amplified sound received at our microphones will be significantly less than the direct instrument or vocal sound. If amplified sound must be used, it should be used sparingly in keeping with the philosophy of enhancing the natural sound rather than overwhelming it.

Above all, however, RELAX AND ENJOY YOURSELF! A recording session is a lot of work but can be infinitely rewarding.

http://www.vocho.com/recording_tips.html

a. Public Service Announcement

Producing Public Service Announcements: Public service announcements (PSAs) are radio or TV advertisements that promote community interests. The organization that produces the PSA does not need to purchase airtime for the PSA to run. Instead, it relies on radio or TV stations to donate airtime to run the PSA. PSAs are generally 60 seconds or less and should communicate clear message.

Targeting Stations: In designing your campaign's message, you have already identified an audience. Now think about what media stations your audience listens to. If you were designing a radio PSA, you would want to think about which radio stations are most popular among your audience. Once you have a list of stations to target, you can focus your efforts on convincing these stations to air your PSA.

Media Gatekeepers: The best way to make sure that your PSAs receive donated airtime in your community is to contact the media managers responsible for PSA placements. Who makes the decisions about which PSAs a media organization will run? It depends. At a good-sized radio or television station, it's the public service director, public affairs director, or community relations manager. In smaller broadcast companies, the station manager or the news or advertising director might make the decisions. These individuals act as media gatekeepers, determining which PSAs will be awarded time or space, as well as when and where they will appear.

Making Your Case: At any given time, media gatekeepers have between 30 and 50 PSAs all vying for airtime. What makes the difference between a PSA that receives a media organization's blessing (and use) and one that joins the abundant ranks of PSAs never used? In most cases, it is the media gatekeepers' judgment of whether or not the issue addressed is of local relevance-whether it's something that affects people in the community, whether it addresses

a problem they are concerned about. When contacting the media about your PSA, be sure you can clearly state your campaign's goals, audience, and message.

Here are some pointers for media contacts:

1. *Ask for a meeting.* In an initial phone call or letter, ask to set up a meeting with the media decision maker. You might also want to invite one or spokespersons--e.g., a school principal, police officer, community members—who share your viewpoints. Especially in competitive media markets, third-party endorsements from influential people in the community can give you the edge you need to get media attention for your cause. A meeting gives you the opportunity to address your contact's concerns, answer questions, and deliver personal encouragement. Keep it short--15 to 30 minutes-- and use the time to provide an overview of your campaign and review the PSA. Be sure to have a written script of the PSA and a tape of the PSA if possible.

2. *Get the facts.* There's no substitute for good information when it comes to making your case. Use data, news articles, and other sources to compile a local "snapshot" portrait. Also, draw attention to other local groups that are working to address this issue. By portraying the issue as an urgent one confronting the community--and by showing media managers how they can help the community reduce it--you go a long way toward convincing them that this is a campaign they can't ignore.

3. *Be compelling.* Facts alone can be impersonal. Compelling stories about people in your community who have been touched by the issue can be powerfully persuasive in demonstrating local relevance and motivating the media to do something. Point out the importance of public education (through the PSAs and other means) in spurring people to individual and collective action.

4. *Offer more than just the PSA.* Share other activities you are planning as part of your larger project, such as a brochure you are designing or a skit you are presenting to teens. Describe the services, activities, events, and programs available to people in your community through local organizations and institutions active in your issue.

5. *Listen, react, respond.* Don't forget, this is a partnership. The media have more to offer than simply getting your PSA out in the community. Media professionals are in the communications business. They can help you frame strategies and messages for local outreach.

5. *Don't push too hard.* Leaving the meeting without a firm commitment that the media organization will use the PSAs doesn't mean you've struck out. Public affairs managers may need to consult with others before making a decision. Or perhaps they will want to digest what you have said, review the materials on their own, and then decide. Your most important objective is to make your case for the campaign and to express appreciation for the opportunity to do so.

6. *Follow up and keep in touch.* Within three days of the meeting, send a letter thanking your media host for the opportunity to get together, continuing any agreements reached during the discussion and, if appropriate, mentioning that you're looking forward to his or her decision.

--YOVA

Audio/Visual

Videotaping Tips:

Straight, steady, and smooth: Use the 3S's rule to make your footage look professional.

Lighting: Make sure you have the right amount of light to capture the scene, especially avoiding backlighting.

Capturing sound: Use an external mic to get better sound.

Field of view: Make what is most important visible.

Framing the shot: Compose the shot in appealing ways, and make your movie more visually interesting.

Where to put the camera: Change the look and feel of a shot by moving the camera around and getting different perspectives.

Tape management: Don't forget to label the tapes!

Editing process: Do not try to edit the movie with perfection the first time through. Edit your movie in passes, using the assembly, rough, and final cut process.

<http://www.adobe.com/education/digkids/tips/index.html>

c. Webpage

Designing a Website: Most people use the internet now more than ever before, so bringing your outreach campaign to the internet can spread your campaign messages to anyone with access anywhere in the world. Designing a website or webpages to support your campaign isn't very complicated, but it is different from designing a poster or writing a brochure. People visiting websites want to find useful information quickly and easily. They don't want to wait for complex graphics to load, and they don't want to struggle to find relevant information on a poorly designed site.

Starting out: So you want your campaign to have a presence online. How do you get started? First, think about what information you would like to share online. If you have an idea about what you want to share, you can determine if you really need to create a website or if you just want to create a webpage attached to an existing site.

You also need to clarify your target audience. Do you want the site to appeal to youth? Do you want to share information for both youth and adults? Your target audience will impact the style of the site and the language you use when writing the website's content.

Writing for the web: Writing for the web is different from writing a paper for your English class. Here are some tips for effective writing:

- *Be concise:* Omit unnecessary words, stick to your topic, and avoid repetition. Stay focused on your message. What you write for the web should be half as long as what you would write for a brochure.
- *Use the active voice:* Active verbs convey your message concisely. Instead of writing, "It is important to set the table for dinner," say, "Set the table for dinner."
- *Write for an international audience:* Anyone anywhere with internet access will be able to visit your website. Make sure that everyone can understand your message by avoiding slang terms, popular sayings, or figures of speech.
- *Use proper grammar and edit your work:* Some people, viewing the internet as a less formal means of communication than printed documents, let grammar rules slide. But following grammar rules will make you look knowledgeable and professional.
- *Use a news article format:* Put the most important information first, and add details afterward. This is sometimes called an inverted-pyramid style.

- *Provide additional resources:* Links to the websites of other organizations direct your visitors to additional information than the destination website contains.
- *Don't plagiarize!* Remember to restate information in your own words or to credit the source of quotations and statistics.
- *In addition to the actual content on your website, how your information is laid out will impact the usability of the site.*
- *Break text up:* Write in short paragraphs, use headings and subheadings and bulleted lists. This will help visitors find the information they are looking for quickly in a user-friendly form. Visitors may not have the time or patience to wade through long blocks of text to learn key information, so present your information in manageable chunks.
- *Write 'above the fold':* Make sure visitors can see all the important information as soon as the page loads. Visitors might not think to scroll down the page to uncover additional information.
- *Avoid overload:* Boldfacing, underlining, or highlighting too many words can visually confuse and overwhelm a visitor. Also, visitors generally assume that underlined or highlighted words are hyperlinks, so avoid underlining or highlighting words that don't link to other sites.

The first thing visitors react to when they come to your site is the site design—The colors, graphics, and general appearance of your site. They will also be looking for clues on how your site is laid out. When you pick up a new book, you look at the table of contents to learn what the book is about and where you will find information of interest. Similarly, you want your website's homepage to grab your visitor's attention and direct them to the information they are looking for. Here are some things to think about:

- *Font and color:* Identify a few colors (three or four) for your site; too many colors can overwhelm a viewer. Pick a font that is clear and easy to read, and display your information large enough for individuals to read. Black letters on a white background are easiest to read.
- *Graphics and special effects:* Some browsers take a long time to load complex graphics and do not support special effects. Avoid including these things just because you can. If you include them, make sure they enhance and complement your message.
- *Links to the homepage:* Make sure a visitor can get from any page on your website back to the homepage without clicking the browser's back button. A search engine might direct someone to a page on your website. If that page isn't connected to your homepage in some way, the visitor might not be able to explore the rest of your site.
- *Contact information:* Clearly state who is managing the website. Visitors may want to contact you to obtain more information, bring your attention to a problem on the site (such as a broken link), or compliment your efforts. Share your organization's name and contact information on the homepage or other clearly designated spot.

--YOVA

Visual and Performance Art

Using the Arts: Through music, drama, dance, and visual arts, teens can draw attention to problems in their community, educate others about victimizations, and suggest places to go for help. These arts and performances can take many forms, from ten-minute skits to full-length compositions. Consider the abilities of the people on your team—they may have produced videos or photo essays; designed T-shirts or ceramics; played the saxophone or the violin; or performed ballet, modern, or jazz dances.

At the heart of a youth-led arts or performance activity is the talent of young people. Musicians, dancers, set builders, sculptors, actors, stagehands, water colorists, muralists, costumers, and poets can use their talents to deliver a prevention message. The team members should agree on the central message. Focusing on one message makes a powerful impact. Different paintings on the theme “Healthy Relationships” will make a stronger statement than dozens of paintings dealing with dozens of issues. An adult may have the idea or suggest one, but the commitment and talent of the youth are central to communicating that idea to the community.

Your team will also need materials, costumes, performance or exhibit space, practice or developmental space, some equipment, and a means to publicize the event or events and recruit suitable audiences. Some of these things might be donated by a school, house of worship, university, or business. Other suppliers might provide discounts or offer to help recruit an audience. Still others with experience in the arts—teachers, parents, or neighbors—might agree to act as advisers or provide special talent or coaching. It is important to make as thorough a list as possible of your project’s needs and keep adding to it as new needs arise.

Dance, music, photography, and other arts transcend language. They can help bridge barriers among cultural, racial, and ethnic groups. Adults and peers gain a new appreciation for the talents of your team. A photography exhibit, play, or music recital can generate real enthusiasm for the abilities of teens and provide much-deserved recognition.

Making Presentations:

Presentations are designed to provide education about a subject, to start discussion, or to mobilize action. A presentation might provide opposing viewpoints, persuasive arguments for a position, or information on the benefits of implementing the proposed action. A presentation provides an opportunity to make the case for your point of view or to provide information in a structured way so that your audience understands the problems and the opportunities and can decide what action to take. A speech that mobilizes teenagers or adults can be a catalyst for addressing your issue on a larger scale. A presentation that generates discussion about your concern may help the community understand that something can be done to deal with the problem. A presentation could take place before a school assembly, town council, civic federation, service club, or any other group—even a national conference.

Planning a presentation: Begin by deciding why you are making the presentation. Do you want to inform, persuade, or motivate? What will be the content? Who will be the audience? How much time will you have to make the presentation? Will you need to hand out materials or use audiovisual aids to supplement the presentation? Would another method of reinforcing your message be better? What outcomes would you like to see from the presentation? What special needs, concerns, or situations will be relevant?

- *Making an effective presentation:*

- *Know your subject matter.*
- *Know your audience's characteristics and interests.*
- *Center the presentation around the outcomes you want.*
- *Relate your outcomes to you audience's interests.*
- *Manage the direction of the session.*
- *Encourage individual participation.*

Be familiar with the physical setting. Will you be in a classroom or an auditorium? Will the people be sitting at tables or desks or on the floor? Can you rearrange the seating? If you want to use a visual prop or show a video, can everyone see? What equipment will you need to bring with you? Can you set it up in advance? Consider visiting the presentation site in advance if you haven't seen it or used it before. Be sure to arrive early to check that all physical arrangements are in place.

Be sure you understand timing and other requirements. How long will you speak? Make sure that you and the people who invited you agree on how much time your presentation will take. Does that time include questions and answers from the audience, or will additional time be allowed? Will there be a moderator to assist you in fielding questions from the audience? What kind of presentation has been successful with this audience?

Present information in a focused, concise way. Adult attention wanders after about 12 minutes. Focus your presentation by sticking to one objective or a relatively small set of objectives. Organize your facts, your logic, and your conclusions in ways that support each objective. Examples help enrich and enliven your presentation and keep the audience focused.

- *Actively involve the group. If you can find ways to involve the audience in the presentation, they will be more likely to retain information. Here are some ways to do it:*
- *Case histories: Use stories of specific efforts that include a focus on the people involved.*
- *Debates: Two people (or more) present both sides of an issue.*
- *Demonstrations: Show examples or activities.*
- *Filmstrip/slides: These can dramatically illustrate your message.*
- *Games or quizzes: These can provide variety and interest.*
- *Overhead transparencies: These help the audience focus on key points or understand important numbers.*
- *Panel discussions: Several people present different aspects of the information.*
- *Role-playing: Volunteers act out a technique.*
- *Skits: A skit can make your message come alive; you can then expand on the material presented in the skit.*

Use effective examples to strengthen your point. Examples can strengthen and enliven your presentation. Each example should be short and clear; it should not offend or confuse the audience, and it should be immediately related to the point at hand. Examples from real life, whether drawn from newspapers, television, magazine stories, or your own (or others') experiences, are generally better than those created just to make a point. But be careful not to violate any confidences when you give examples. For instance, don't mention that your best friend told you about a family problem if everyone in the audience knows who your best friend is.

Reinforce your point. Use the following methods to emphasize key points:

- *Make the same point several different ways.*

- *End the presentation with a review, or ask the members of the audience what they've learned and how it applies to their own lives.*
 - *Ask the audience to recall important points; write the points on a flip chart.*
- Create and maintain an atmosphere for learning. Here are some ways to do this:*
- *Address all members of the group, making each person feel important.*
 - *Check with the audience to see whether you got your points across.*
 - *Ask questions and allow time in your schedule for the audience to ask questions.*
 - *Consider answering questions at key intervals, not just at the end.*
 - *Explain that all questions are welcome and build a sense of trust and respect so that everyone feels comfortable about asking questions.*
 - *Remember to show good manners by thanking your audience and those who invited or helped you.*
 - *Whether you're sitting on a speakers' platform or in the audience, be respectful and attentive to the other speakers and the program.*

--YOVA

Partnership and Community Outreach Suggestions

Youth Connections

Contact persons: Tracy Moseman, Casey Molloy

Location: Helena Middle School,

Phone: 324-1078

Department of Public Health

Boyd Andrew Community Services

Exploration Works

Holter Art Museum

God's Love Shelter

Helena Food Share

Department of Parks and Recreation

St. Peter's Hospital

Lewis and Clark Public Library

Contact persons: Patricia Spencer, Community Outreach

Location:

Phone:

Independent Record F.L.I.G.H.T

Queen City News